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WORKPLACE THREATS AND VIOLENCE

The problem of workplace threats and violence was addressed briefly in the **March 2004 Bulletin**. In this issue of the Bulletin, we will take a closer look at this serious problem, and the resources available in MRP for dealing with it.

The Threatening Situation

In some cases, threatening or violent situations develop slowly. In the beginning, you may notice changes in an employee’s behavior that cause concern but are not obviously threatening or violent. Here’s an example:

Jim has worked for you for several years. He has generally been a good worker, and hasn’t caused any problems until recently. Lately, however, all he seems to do is complain about his workload, his coworkers, management and so on. You have also noticed other changes in his behavior, such as frequent arguing with coworkers and attendance problems. When you try to talk to him, he becomes defensive.

So far Jim has not behaved in a manner that would cause immediate alarm. For example, he has not displayed a weapon, struck a coworker, or made any overt verbal threats. All you know is that his behavior is changing, and not for the better. Perhaps it’s just a passing problem, but it could possibly be something more serious. Whatever it is, this is the time to start dealing with it, before it gets worse. Your servicing employee relations specialist (ERS) can help you identify options and strategies. If you are concerned about possible workplace violence, your workplace violence program (WVP) coordinator can help you identify the kind of behavior that may be indicative of an emerging problem, and can help you identify and implement prevention strategies.

Despite your efforts, you have noticed that Jim’s tone has become increasingly strident and belligerent. Some of your employees have come to you with concerns about his comments and actions that they believe are threatening. You were informed that Jim recently told a coworker that “if things did not get better soon, he might have to take matters into his own hands.”

It is now becoming clearer that a threatening situation is emerging. If you have not done so already, it is now time to contact your agency WVP coordinator or your servicing ERS. The ERS and the WVP coordinator will normally work together in such circumstances. Generally speaking, the ERS will be involved with disciplinary issues, and the WVP coordinator with issues directly related to investigating the threatening situation.

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The MRP Workplace Violence Programs

Each MRP agency has a workplace violence program. The following is a brief review of these programs. We want to thank program coordinators David Trykowski (AMS), John Capehart (APHIS) and Mack Manis (GIPSA) for preparing summaries of their programs. For more information, please give them a call. Telephone numbers are listed on the last page of this article.

AMS Workplace Violence Prevention Program

The Agricultural Marketing Service has defined workplace violence as any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. In AMS Directive 4790.1 (Prevention of Workplace Violence, Including Assaults or Intimidation of AMS Employees) we have established a very simple, very clear policy on prevention of workplace violence, as outlined below:

- Violence of any kind; aggression; threats; and intimidating, belligerent, or disruptive behavior, will not be tolerated.
- Any employee who genuinely believes that he or she is in danger must get out of harm's way, even if it means leaving the work site, and immediately report the danger to his or her supervisor and appropriate law enforcement authorities.
- All employees, especially supervisors and managers, must be sensitive to the warning signs of potential workplace violence.
- Any employee who observes a situation, which has some of the warning signs of potential workplace violence, must report it to his or her supervisor.
- Our servicing Employee Relations office serves as the focal point for workplace violence issues. Supervisors should report all situations of actual or potential workplace violence to Employee Relations. The Employee Relations office will provide advice, and bring in additional

professionals, as needed, from the following resources: senior program management, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Civil Rights program, local police or the Federal Protective Service, the Office of Inspector General, the AMS Compliance Office, and the AMS Office of Safety and Security.

Any individual who is experiencing a personal problem and any manager or supervisor who is trying to determine how to help an employee with a problem may take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Counselors are available to provide professional help in dealing with problems occurring both on and off the job. The service is free, confidential within the limits of the law, and voluntary. EAP counselors are prepared to assist with virtually any issue or problem that may arise, including emotional problems, relationship problems, family issues, alcohol/other drug abuse, job issues, and financial crisis situations. EAP services are provided through Federal Occupational Health, a part of the U.S. Public Health Service. Employees can obtain EAP services by calling 1-800-222-0364 for information or assistance, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Calls to EAP are automatically routed to counselors in the area the employee is calling from.

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APHIS Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program

The APHIS Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program (WVPRP) responds to and investigates reports of workplace violence throughout APHIS. The WVPRP also aids in the prevention of workplace violence by providing training to APHIS employees and managers to enhance their understanding of workplace violence, how to prevent it, and how to carry out their duties and responsibilities in reporting workplace violence incidents. APHIS policy, in accordance with the USDA Handbook on Workplace Violence Prevention and Response, states,

“Threats or acts of violence against persons or property will not be tolerated. This includes acts of intimidation or harassment, or other inappropriate behavior which causes fear for personal safety. These can be cause for serious disciplinary action and possible criminal charges. Federal law prohibits the knowing possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons in Federal facilities. This includes Government-owned and leased space, Government-owned or leased vehicles, and personal vehicles when used on official business, or parked in Government-owned or leased areas. Exception may be made only if the possession of the weapon is an approved job requirement.”

APHIS defines workplace violence based on the definition contained in the USDA Handbook on Workplace Violence Prevention and Response, which states,

“Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, contractors, and other non-Federal employees. A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or ‘road rage.’ Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, coworker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.”

There are various methods by which reports of workplace violence incidents or threats of workplace violence are received. These can be via phone, e-mail, fax, or word of mouth. If a verbal or telephonic report is received, the APHIS WVPRP Coordinator will request written confirmation containing the details of the complaint. The Coordinator will also act as investigator on the case or will assign another investigator to determine the facts of the case.

GIPSA Prevention and Resolution Program

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) prides itself on our employees’ professional conduct in the workplace. But, we are fully aware of the ever present risk of workplace violence and are committed to working with our employees to maintain a work environment that is free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior.

GIPSA’s policy on violence in the workplace is quite simple. Threats, violence, intimidation, or other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All incidents will be taken seriously. Persons who make threats or behave in a disruptive, intimidating, or violent fashion will be removed from the workplace immediately and referred for

disciplinary action. To reinforce this policy, we have taken the following actions:

- ✓ Developed clear Agency guidelines (GIPSA Directive 4790.2, “Workplace Violence Prevention and Response”) and made these guidelines available to all GIPSA employees.
- ✓ Initiated a nationwide workplace violence prevention training program.
- ✓ Continued to seek early resolution of potential workplace violence situations; i.e., stop problems before they become incidents.
- ✓ Participated on the USDA Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Committee.
- ✓ At least once a year, GIPSA collateral duty safety and health officers and GIPSA field office and regional office managers meet with their employees to review GIPSA’s workplace violence prevention and response policy.

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Some Things to Consider

1. **Document threatening/violent incidents as soon as possible.** It is important that threats and incidents involving workplace violence be documented immediately, while they are still fresh in the minds of those who have witnessed them. When documenting an incident, it is particularly important that you note (1) the history of the problem, to the extent that you know it, and (2) any information that you have, including witness statements, which will help determine the severity and immediacy of the problem. This information will help your WVP coordinator and servicing ERS determine what needs to be done, and how quickly.
2. **Contact law enforcement personnel when a situation presents an immediate threat to safety.** Law enforcement personnel are trained to deal with such situations, and, therefore, should be contacted before anyone else, including your servicing ERS or WVP coordinator. When the threat is immediate, your first consideration must always be the safety of your employees and other persons in the vicinity.
3. **Anticipate and plan for workplace violence.** Although it is not possible to predict and prevent every incident of workplace violence, there are some things you can do prior to the development of such problems that will increase your odds of dealing successfully with them if they do arise. Here are a few ideas:
 - **Encourage your employees to express concerns** and report threats, intimidation or potentially violent activity. If they are reluctant to do so, it is possible that important clues regarding the early development of a problem may not surface.
 - **Inventory** your work area to identify **security strengths and weaknesses**. How effective is the lighting? Where are the escape routes and how accessible are they? What barriers are available to prevent access to your work area? These are among the many questions that need to be addressed.
 - **Have an emergency response plan** in the event that a threatening or violent situation develops. Such a plan often emerges from your security inventory (sometimes known as a “threat assessment survey”). Once you have a plan, share it with your employees.
 - **Be aware of the early warning signs** of a developing workplace violence problem. These signs may include a short temper or intense anger, growing frustration with the job, severe mood swings, unexplained negative changes in conduct or performance, irrational comments, frequent disputes with coworkers, and many others.

Your WVP coordinators can help you prepare for the possibility of violence in your work unit. Again, the more advance preparation you do, the greater the likelihood that you will be able to deal successfully with a threatening or violent situation.

Important Numbers

<u>Program</u>	<u>Telephone Numbers</u>
AMS Workplace Violence Prevention Program	202/720-6766
APHIS Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program	866/234-3174; 301/734-3174
GIPSA Prevention and Resolution Program	202/720-0244
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	800/222-0364
AMS Alternative Resolution Program	866/227-0328; 202/690-3017
APHIS Conflict Prevention and Resolution Program	301/734-4950
GIPSA Prevention and Resolution Program	202/690-3640
Employee Relations Branch	Numbers listed on last page

The Importance of Effective Communication

Ineffective communication is often at the root of conduct and performance problems, which is why we mention the subject so often in the Bulletin. The following is an example of what can go wrong when people don't communicate effectively. This is an excerpt from the transcript of a radio conversation between a U.S. naval ship and Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland.

U.S. Ship: Please divert your course 0.5 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Canadian Reply: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

U.S. Ship: This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again, divert your course.

Canadian Reply: No, I say again, you divert your course.

U.S. Ship: THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS CORAL SEA. WE ARE A LARGE WARSHIP OF THE U.S. NAVY. DIVERT YOUR COURSE NOW!!

Canadian Reply: This is a lighthouse. Your call.

OOPS!! Unfortunately some of our conversations are not a whole lot more effective than this one. Fortunately in this case the parties got to the lighthouse portion of the conversation before the USS Coral Sea got to the lighthouse.

Often when we have conversations with others, particularly when those conversations deal with sensitive or stressful subjects such as unsatisfactory performance or misconduct, we end up on a collision course because we don't listen to what the other person is saying. One of the reasons that mediation is successful is that the process is designed to get participants to listen to each other. So before you hit the lighthouse in your own conversations, take time to listen to what your employee is saying. It can save you a lot of time and future problems.

For more information about communicating with your employees about conduct and performance issues, see the *Index of Articles* in the **December 2003 Bulletin**.



THE BULLETIN BOARD

✚ Just a reminder that the Employee Relations Bulletins are available on the web at www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs. When you get to the site, click *Human Resources* and then *Employee Relations*. (**Note:** Several persons have mentioned that they accidentally clicked onto the Labor Relations site instead of the Employee Relations site following publication of the March 2004 Bulletin. Please note that there are separate sites for Labor and Employee Relations. The Labor Relations newsletter can be accessed through the Labor Relations website).

✚ Also available at the site noted above is **USDA Bulletin 735-1 (Employee Responsibilities and Conduct)**. Every supervisor should have a copy of this document. It contains the conduct standards of the Department of Agriculture. Although this bulletin shows an expiration date of December 31, 1998, it is still applicable, and will be until replaced by a permanent document.

MORE ABOUT THOSE GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CREDIT CARDS



We discussed some issues regarding use of the Government-issued VISA travel credit card in the **June 2003 Bulletin**. It was noted that an employee has two primary obligations relative to the use of this card – to use it only for reimbursable expenses related to official travel, and to pay the balance due by the date printed on the bill. Here are a few updates.

- The USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) recently published an excellent brochure entitled, **“Travel Card Do’s and Don’ts for Employees.”** All employees who travel should have a copy of this brochure. The brochure is available on the web at:

<http://www.usda.gov/ocfo/travel/pdf/dodont.pdf>
- Agencies now have the authority to deduct money owed on the Visa travel card from an employee’s pay, and to charge an administrative processing fee. In addition, since delinquent payments are a violation of Department regulations, failure to pay a balance due in a timely manner could result in disciplinary or other administrative action against the employee. It is therefore particularly important that employees pay their credit card balances by the due date.
- Since the Bank of America typically cancels the travel cards of employees who are significantly overdue in their payments, we have encountered a number of situations where such employees are attempting, unsuccessfully, to get travel advances when required to travel. Government Travel Card Guidance, Section 6, Subsection j (Cancellation of Travel Charge Cards), dated April 11, 2003, states the following:

“Employees who have lost their charge card privileges because of delinquency or use of the card for non-official purposes and need to perform official travel will charge their common carrier transportation to their agency centrally billed accounts. All other travel-related costs must be paid by the employee using a personal charge card or with personal funds.”

“A cancelled travel card account reflects unfavorable past performance. For this reason, employees with cancelled travel card accounts are considered high risk in the repayment of travel advances. Travel advances will not be allowed for issuance to individuals with cancelled travel charge cards.”

Questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to the person(s) who handle travel arrangements for your program.

- A reminder that registration, training and conference fees cannot be paid using a Visa travel card. These expenses must be paid for with a **Visa purchase card**.

DEALING WITH A PROBLEM EMPLOYEE A SUPERVISOR'S STORY

[Editor's Note: This article was written by an APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine Program supervisor. The employee's name has been changed to protect her identity.]

Two things that can destroy workplace morale and productivity are a problem employee, and a supervisor who won't deal with the employee. I had the misfortune of inheriting such an employee when she was reassigned to me from another PPQ supervisor. Here's what happened:

Marsha had more than 10 years of federal service when I became her supervisor. She presented herself as a dedicated employee who would always be there when I needed her. Unfortunately that was not the case. When a mistake was brought to her attention, her response was "no problem," and she would happily fix the error. Unfortunately the same errors were made and corrected over and over – even after training.

Marsha was not a team player and would shirk her duties when I wasn't around. Her coworkers began to complain to me about having to pick up the slack. Their morale and performance soon declined. I talked to Marsha about her performance and the need to do better, and when she informed me that she was distracted by personal problems, I suggested that she contact the Employee Assistance Program.

I also realized Marsha's performance standards were not very good. They were too generic. They did not accurately describe her responsibilities, and lacked quality, quantity and timeliness measures. With the help of my servicing employee relations specialist (ERS), I talked with a human resources specialist who helps supervisors develop good performance standards.

I soon began to consult regularly with my ERS. I also paid closer attention to Marsha's daily activities. I noticed that when I was out of the office, it was nearly impossible to call Marsha as her phone would roll over to voice mail. Her coworkers began to complain about her excessive use of the telephone for personal calls. About this same time, I was contacted by a USDA investigator concerning allegations that Marsha had misused her PCMS purchase card. I documented the employee complaints, and counseled Marsha about appropriate use of Government property. I also began to pay more attention to what Marsha was doing. Often when I walked past her work station, I noticed that her computer screen would quickly change, suggesting that she was minimizing or closing a screen. I also noticed that she was surfing the web when she should have been working. I contacted a USDA investigator to access the logs on Marsha's computer. The investigator arrived in a few weeks to image the hard drive while Marsha was on annual leave.

It was several weeks before the PCMS and computer investigations were completed and the reports delivered. I learned, much to my dismay, that the evidence might not be strong enough to win the case on appeal, and that a supplemental investigation could not be done for several months. The evidence was strong enough, however, to develop a Last Chance Agreement (LCA) and get Marsha's attention. The LCA was a good fit because it could be customized for my situation. The agreement basically requires the employee to admit to misconduct, agree to specific remediation and waive all rights of appeal if the terms of the Agreement are violated. If the agreement is violated the employee can be dismissed without right of appeal. When Marsha was presented with the option of resignation, removal or the LCA, she chose the Agreement and was thankful to keep her job and have a last chance!

I also changed my tactics, and decided that I needed to pay closer attention and do my own investigating. I kept detailed notes on Marsha's daily activities. When she didn't complete her work correctly or on time, I reminded

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Dealing With a Problem Employee (Continued)

her of the measures in her performance standards and wrote a note for my file. When I suspected that she was surfing the web when she was supposed to be working, I asked what she was doing, advised her of what was acceptable and wrote a note for my file. When she was overusing the telephone for personal business, I reminded her of the rules and wrote a note for my file. I kept my ERS informed of my activities, and she in turn offered assurance and guidance. After a couple of months, a review of Marsha's Internet file revealed that she had been visiting a variety of websites during the work day that were not related to her work. While limited personal browsing is permitted on the employee's own time, Marsha was browsing throughout the day – when she was supposed to be working.

Marsha's conduct was a violation of the LCA. The Internet file and my compiled notes were given to the ERS who prepared the separation papers. Marsha was given the choice of resigning or being removed from employment. She decided to resign.

The process described above did take time, but productivity and morale are increasing in my work unit. As a supervisor, I have a responsibility to ensure that PPQ resources are properly used. I am responsible for fairly evaluating employee performance and taking appropriate action to ensure that my employees' performance and conduct are acceptable. The ERS is there to advise and assist supervisors in handling personnel issues. My professional training is in science, not human relations. Having an ERS who is trained to deal with the human element is a vital resource for every supervisor and manager. Based on my experiences, here is what I consider some **actions for success**:

- **Solve the problem, don't pass it on.** Reassigning a poor employee doesn't solve anything. It just moves the problem to another organization, seriously damaging the morale of yet another work unit.
- **Promptly address poor performance and confront inappropriate conduct.** Don't wait for mid-year and annual performance evaluations to address deficiencies. Do it when you become aware of the problem – when it is fresh in your mind and your employee's mind.
- **Document everything.** Keep a memo of record in a convenient but secure location to quickly document every time that you must correct the employee's conduct or performance. Bits and pieces of information can be put together to reveal the bigger picture.
- **Ask for statements.** Disgruntled coworkers are often quick to tell the boss about a problem with a coworker. Ask them to send you an email of their observations so you can better track performance and conduct. Save these emails in a special file in Lotus Notes.
- **Do your own research.** Don't expect federal investigators to do all the work or deliver what you need in a timely manner. As a supervisor, you have the right to compile evidence on misconduct, including possible computer misuse, without permission from the employee.
- **Talk to a peer.** Taking firm corrective action can be mentally exhausting. It helps to talk with a trusted peer or your own supervisor for support and encouragement. They may be dealing with similar situations and you can share ideas about how to handle your situations.
- **Be patient.** It takes time and vigilance to succeed.
- **Ask for help.** Your servicing ERS is there to advise you on how to best deal with performance and conduct issues. This is a valuable resource that every supervisor should use. Don't wait for things to get bad before seeking assistance.

THE ETHICS CORNER

"THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES"



The General Principles are conduct standards that pertain to every Federal employee. They are found in *Section 2635.101(b)* of the Office of Government Ethics publication entitled "**Part 2635 – Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.**" All supervisors should have a copy of this publication. The Principles are:

- 1. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws and ethical principles above private gain.**
2. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
- 3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.**
4. An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.
- 5. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.**
6. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
- 7. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.**
8. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- 9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.**
10. Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
- 11. Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse and corruption to appropriate authorities.**
12. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligation as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those – such as Federal, State, or local taxes – that are imposed by law.
- 13. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicap.**
14. Employee shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

Your servicing employee relations specialist and the MRP Ethics Advisor can help you determine how these principles may apply to specific situations in your work unit. The **MRP Ethics Advisor** can be reached at 202-720-9858.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

THE LIGHTER SIDE

- **NEW OFFICE POLICY: SICKNESS AND RELATED LEAVE:** We will no longer accept a doctor's statement as proof of sickness. If you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work!
- A company, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hired a new CEO. He was determined to rid the company of slackers. On a tour of the facility, he noticed a guy leaning on a wall. The room was full of workers, and he wanted to let them know he meant business! So he asked the guy, "How much money do you make in a week?" Undaunted, the young fellow looked at him and replied, "I make \$300 a week. Why?" The CEO then handed him \$300 in cash and screamed, "Here's a week's pay. Now get out and don't come back!" Feeling pretty good about his first firing, he looked around the room and asked, "Does anyone want to tell me what that goof-off did here?" With a sheepish grim, one of the workers muttered, "Um...that was the pizza delivery guy."
- **"I always arrive late at the office, but I make up for it by leaving early."** (Charles Lamb) From the Federal Personnel Management Institute's newsletter "FedNews On Line"



"... but, he's a good employee!"

Has one of your employees engaged in misconduct? Have you decided not to discipline this employee? Maybe you think it's just too much trouble to go through the disciplinary process? Think again.

Three recent cases were decided before the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) involving supervisors who failed to take appropriate disciplinary action to correct an employee's gross misconduct, and then lied about the fact that they were aware of the misconduct during a subsequent investigation. What were the results?

Despite the fact that the supervisors had between 14 and 37 years of experience with the agency,

the MSPB agreed with the agency's action to discipline the supervisors based on their failure to act, and determined that demotion was a reasonable penalty. This determination was based on the fact that the supervisors were responsible for and in a position to do something about the misconduct, yet had a lapse of supervisory judgment and failed to take any action whatsoever. The MSPB also determined that the supervisors' inaction made it clear that they were unable, or unwilling, to initiate any action against employees who engaged in misconduct and that their demotion promoted the efficiency of the service.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The APHIS 'Managing Performance and Conduct Program' for Experienced Supervisors

Although APHIS has historically done a commendable job of training new supervisors as well as providing future leaders with the necessary skills to enable them to perform their jobs effectively, until approximately 4 years ago, formal development for experienced supervisors and managers had been neglected. This created a development vacuum which tended to separate new and experienced supervisors because they found themselves using different techniques, practices, and methods of supervision.

In January 2000, the APHIS Management Team (AMT) directed that a comprehensive, multi-year training program be designed and developed to update the skills of APHIS' experienced supervisors and managers. The prototype of what was to become ***Managing Performance and Conduct (MPC)*** was piloted in May 2000 in Riverdale, Maryland, with the first field sessions and additional headquarters sessions following immediately thereafter.

The goal of the program has consistently been to provide experienced supervisors and managers with practical, tangible and updated knowledge and skills designed to strengthen their ability to more effectively manage their Human Resources, with a primary focus on Performance Management. This approach has proven beneficial because it has helped to establish a "same language" connection between new and experienced supervisors.

During the past few years, this highly successful MPC Program has been delivered to approximately 1,000 experienced managers and supervisors. In addition, a specifically designed course was created for Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) employees as a result of a request from them and delivered to their supervisors at the Technical Center in Kansas City.

Since March 2002, the program has been available on an "as requested" basis. The APHIS Training and Development Branch (TDB) will continue to offer at least two courses a year for experienced managers and supervisors on an as needed basis. If you are a manager or supervisor who would like to take this course, please contact the APHIS Training and Development Branch at (301) 734-4949.

By Linda J. Story, MRP-Business Services

APHIS Required Training for New Supervisors in a Probationary Status

Fundamentals of APHIS Human Resource Management (FAHRM) Blended Learning, complies with OPM and USDA requirements that **all new supervisors** demonstrate competency in Human Resources Management (HRM). Other leadership competency requirements are listed under the heading of Leadership Effectiveness Framework at the OPM website. The HRM performance requirements read: "ensures effective recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal, recognition, and corrective/ disciplinary action; promotes affirmative employment, good labor relations and employee well-being". FAHRM includes 40 hours of classroom instruction, over 12 hours of web seminars (using the telephone and the internet) and other self-paced, self-study learning required to meet the above stated requirements.

Application and Enrollment Procedures. The FAHRM Training Announcement for calendar year 2004 with course dates, locations, application and enrollment process, and APHIS 601, FAHRM course application, is found at the Training and Development website address:

www.aphis.gov/mrpbs/training_employee_development.html

The upcoming FAHRM course in August will be located within the Pacific Time Zone states, and will be based on the selected applicants' locations.

Course Dates: August 9 - 13, 2004 (40 hour classroom instruction)

Web Seminar Dates: August 23 - 27, 2004

For Additional Information Contact:

FAHRM Program Manager, 301-734-8554 or betsy.m.guardiola@aphis.usda.gov

FAHRM Program Assistant, 301-734-5551 or Tanya.briscoe@aphis.usda.gov

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DIRECTORY

APHIS

Riverdale

Kathy Welsh, *Branch Chief*

Vacant, Senior ERS, Assistant to the Branch Chief

(301) 734-4414

Lucille Lorenzano, Secretary

(301) 734-4414

Michelle Parker, ERS, Washington/Riverdale (located in Raleigh)

(919) 855-7067

FAX: (301) 734-6351

Minneapolis/Fort Collins (Western Region)

Joan Carlson, *Team Leader*, Center for Veterinary Biologics, National
Veterinary Services Laboratories

(612) 336-3299

Milo Christianson, ERS - MRPBS-Minneapolis, Customer Training,
Special Projects, MSPB Assistance

(612) 336-3215

Jodi Foley, ERS - Wildlife Services

(612) 336-3301

Linda Hatfield, ER Assistant, National Agency Checks/Inquiries (NACI)

(612) 336-3292

FAX: (612) 370-2297

Trudy Driver, ERS - Plant Protection & Quarantine (PPQ), National Wildlife
Research Center (WS)

(970) 494-7417

Taryn McCaughey, Clerk

(970) 494-7419

Dennis McPeters, ERS - Animal Care, MRPBS – WR (IES, IT, ESD),
ERS Training, Special Projects, MSPB Assistance

(970) 494-7418

Rene Wing, ERS - Veterinary Services, Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health

(970) 494-7416

FAX: (970) 494-7424

Raleigh (Eastern Region)

Barbara Singleton, *Team Leader*, Wildlife Services, Animal Care

(919) 855-7063

Inger Alston, ERS - VS

(919) 855-7062

Margaret Brasfield, ERS - IES, CPHST

(919) 855-7065

Aziza Clark, ER Assistant

(919) 855-7070

Yamira Moreno-Cruz, ERS - PPQ

(919) 855-7066

FAX: (919) 855-7074

AMS/GIPSA

Mark Leking, *Branch Chief*

(202) 720-5721

Vondell Henson, *Team Leader*, APHIS International Services

(202) 720-9039

Sandy Davis-Conway, ERS - Fruit & Vegetables, Tobacco

(202) 205-3855

Julie Dunn, ER Assistant

(202) 720-1055

Keela Harris, Secretary

(202) 720-5721

Kimberly Meyer-Chambers, ERS – GIPSA, Livestock & Seed, Transportation &
Marketing

(202) 720-5721

Stephanie Renslow, ERS – Cotton, Dairy, Poultry, Science & Technology
(located in Minneapolis)

(612) 336-3302

Mary Royster, ERS - MRP Ethics Advisor (Financial Disclosures, Outside
Employment, Conflicts of Interest)

(202) 720-9858

Archie Warren, ERS – Fruit & Vegetable

(202) 720-5721

FAX: (202) 720-3039